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# REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM-SOUTH (RADP-S)

## 306-C-00-13-00018

MONTHLY REPORT: January 2015



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## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Cover photo: Veterinary field units treat livestock for farmer extension groups in Daman, Kandahar. Photo credit: USAID/RADP-S.

## ACRONYMS

ADA	Afghan Development Association
APS	Annual Program Statement
ATAR	Afghanistan Trade and Revenue
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
DAIL	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DDAIL	District DAIL
DOWA	Directorate of Women's Affairs
EAA	Equal Access for Afghanistan
EEU	Enabling Environment Unit
FAIDA	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan
FEG	Farmer Extension Groups
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPS	Global Positioning System
HVC	High Value Crops
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
KIP	Key Implementing Partner
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PPU	Productivity and Production Unit
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PVD	Provincial Veterinarian Department
RADP-S	Regional Agricultural Development Program-South
SMS	Short Message Service
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCFU	Value Chain Facilitation Unit
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
VTSC	Veterinary Training and Support Center

## **SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Program Description**

The purpose of the Regional Agriculture Development Program-South (RADP-S) is to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan. To accomplish this goal, RADP-S focuses on improving the productivity and profitability of the wheat, high value crops, and livestock value chains, while addressing policy, legal and regulatory constraints affecting value chain development. This agricultural development program supports the consolidation of licit economies to fuel sustainable long term economic growth, including providing alternatives to poppy cultivation.

The implementation approach of RADP-S dovetails with Afghan and U.S. government strategies in its focus on advancing food security, regenerating agribusiness, and increasing agriculture sector jobs and incomes. RADP-S aims to strengthen the capacity of producers, associations, traders, and agribusinesses to respond to market demands; facilitate lasting market linkages between value chain actors; and support an enabling environment that allows the private sector to thrive. The program places the Afghan private sector at the forefront of implementation and addresses key crosscutting issues of women's empowerment, agribusiness value chain facilitation, and alternative development in all facets of the program. Embodying USAID's vision for sustainable Afghan-led development, RADP-S lays the foundation for greater and more socially inclusive growth in the agricultural economy.

### **January 2015 Program Highlights**

In January, the Productivity and Production Unit (PPU) continued to facilitate wheat and HVC trainings to farmers in 15 target districts across Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul province. Topics for classroom trainings included wheat integrated pest management (IPM) and weed control. Topics for demonstration farm trainings included orchard establishment, greenhouse IPM and weed control, and vineyard establishment. A total of 5,932 farmers attended trainings in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul province during the month.

On January 11, RADP-S key implementing partner Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) launched the second round of the six-month para-veterinary course at Charikar Vocational Training Center. Eighteen new trainees were selected for the course, which aims to improve the technical ability of students to deliver animal health services. The training covers topics such as livestock anatomy and physiology, problem-based clinical diagnosis, and diagnostic and therapeutic techniques.

During the reporting period, the value chain facilitation unit (VCFU) followed up with four companies – Haji Nazar Mohammad Fresh Fruit Company, Amin Karim Box Making Factory, New Timor Shahi Hatchery and Breeder Farm, and the Mia Saib Dairy Farm – that participated in the Kabul AgFair in September 2014. The VCFU was able to capture data for business deals that resulted from the companies' participation at the AgFair, which was an opportunity for Afghan companies in agricultural-related value chains to increase publicity, identify new customers, network with potential business partners, and share information. As a result of the AgFair, the four companies brokered new business deals worth an estimated \$67,950.

In January, the RADP-S outreach team made steps to initiate an SMS and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) outreach campaign. In partnership with Equal Access, RADP-S identified mobile service provider Roshan to establish a mobile platform from which RADP-S would be able to send SMS messages to farmers. In addition, RADP-S and Equal Access discussed plans to develop weekly agricultural public service announcements (PSAs) that would be disseminated to farmers through an IVR system. The IVR system would allow for farmers/listeners to subscribe after providing basic demographic information. Subscribers would also be able to access the information through an online portal. Based on where farmers reside and what crops they cultivate, the IVR system would distribute agricultural



information and tips on a weekly basis. Equal Access plans to pilot the IVR service in Kandahar for at least one year until gradually scaling up the program to Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan.

## SECTION II: PRODUCTIVITY AND PRODUCTION

### Components 1 & 2: Wheat & High Value Crops (HVCs)

#### **Regional Training**

During the reporting period, RADP-S continued to train beneficiary farmers on wheat and HVC topics. Classroom trainings included wheat integrated pest management (IPM) and weed control. Demonstration farm trainings included orchard establishment, greenhouse IPM and weed control, and vineyard establishment. In the IPM and weed control trainings, farmers learned how to identify pests and diseases in crops and useful techniques to manage weed growth to improve crop yield. In the orchard and vineyard establishment trainings, master trainers instructed trainees on proper site selection, land preparation techniques, crop selection, and tree planting and layout design. A total of 3,525 farmers attended the wheat trainings, and 2,407 farmers attended the HVC trainings.



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**Master trainers demonstrate orchard layout techniques during a training in Dand, Kandahar.**

#### **KIP Capacity Building**

The PPU continued to provide capacity building to KIPs and conducted week long site visits to KIP offices in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul. During the site visits, PPU staff met with KIPs to review training curriculum, monitor trainings, and reconcile training M&E data. The PPU team met with the KIP provincial directors, value chain coordinators, and HVC/wheat training specialists to ensure that activities were being implemented in accordance with KIP schedules.



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**The provincial project manager and wheat specialists survey the growing wheat crops at the Nad-e-Ali demo farm in Helmand.**

#### **Wheat Seed Cultivation**

The certified wheat seeds which were cultivated in the previous reporting period have successfully germinated in 69 demo farms across Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul. Provincial project managers and wheat specialists visited the demo farms to monitor crop growth. The wheat crops will be part of future demo farm trainings focused on wheat.

#### **Amtex Demo Farm Facility**

In preparation for future trainings at the Amtex Demonstration Farm facility, RADP-S enriched the demo farm soil with peat moss and sulfur. The PPU team prepared plots for the cultivation of vegetables including radish, lettuce, and onions. In collaboration with KIP staff, the PPU

also drafted maps for the district demo farms. The final versions of the maps, which will be developed in AutoCAD, will be shared with DAIL for informational purposes as requested.

## Component 3: Livestock

### **Charikar Vocational and Training Support Center (VTSC)**

Following the success of the para-veterinary training completed in December 2014, DCA launched a second round of the six-month para-veterinary training in Parwan province on January 11. After completing an entrance exam, 18 new students began the training course. The training consists of theoretical and field-based learning sessions, which allow trainees to gain practical experience in livestock anatomy and physiology, problem-based clinical diagnosis, and diagnostic and therapeutic techniques essential for assessing the causes of disease. The combination of theoretical and practical field sessions improve trainees' technical ability to deliver animal health services to livestock farmers in remote areas.

### **Farmer Extension Groups**

DCA continued to facilitate livestock extension activities for male and female farmer extension groups (FEGs). During the month, the FEGs conducted trainings in a variety of topics including the importance of de-worming and the reproduction cycles of sheep and goats. A total of 1,202 people attended FEG trainings across targeted districts in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, and Zabul.

In addition to trainings, DCA facilitated de-worming campaigns across target districts. During the campaign, extension workers, veterinary field units (VFUs), and community development councils (CDCs) hosted meetings and conducted educational sessions on the benefits of de-worming livestock. The meetings were also attended by DCA provincial staff and representatives from local DAIL Veterinary Departments.



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**Farmer extension groups receive training in Nawa, Helmand.**

## SECTION III: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### **Public Private Partnership Policy**

In anticipation of the arrival of the public private partnership policy consultant, the RADP-S EEU team collaborated with USAID funded projects, Afghanistan Trade and Revenue (ATAR) Project and Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) Project regarding MAIL legislation such as the forthcoming law on food safety, the law on animal health and public health, as well as the commercial law relating to public private partnerships. Preliminary meetings have laid the groundwork and helped the EEU team collect relevant background documents in preparation for further discussions with MAIL. Also during the reporting period, RADP-S received a request from MAIL to provide policy formulation support on wheat policy, horticulture policy, livestock policy, agricultural mechanics, and extension. The EEU team scheduled a follow up meeting with MAIL to further discuss priorities for these policies areas and facilitate communication between MAIL and private sector actors.

## SECTION IV: VALUE CHAIN FACILITATION

### **Annual Program Statement**

During the reporting period, the VCFU team conducted follow up meetings with 16 agribusinesses in the wheat, broiler and livestock, and fruit and vegetable sectors to further hone concept papers and business plans for potential grantees. The VCFU strategized with company representatives to improve financial sustainability of proposed activities which included trainings on the correct use of inputs,

exposure visits, and strategies for establishing sustainable commercial relations between farmers and companies.

### **AgFair Impact**

During the reporting period, the value chain facilitation unit (VCFU) followed up with four companies – Haji Nazar Mohammad Fresh Fruit Company, Amin Karim Box Making Factory, New Timor Shahi Hatchery and Breeder Farm, and the Mia Saib Dairy Farm – that participated in the Kabul AgFair in September 2014. RADP-S had previously conducted a one day training for the companies on business etiquette and supported the companies in designing brochures, banners, and business cards. During the follow-up meeting, the VCFU captured data on the business deals that resulted from the companies' participation at the AgFair. The AgFair was an opportunity for Afghan companies in agricultural-related value chains to increase publicity, identify new customers, network with potential business partners, and share information. As a result, the four companies connected with various national and international trading companies, brokering new business deals worth approximately \$67,950. The four companies also reported greater name recognition amongst other agribusinesses as a result of the exposure provided by participation in the AgFair. Because the business deals were tied to companies that are not a part of RADP-S's regular value chain activities, there are no MOUs in place with each company; therefore, the RADP-S M&E team is in the process of fully verifying the amounts.

## **SECTION V: GENDER**

### **Coordination Meetings**

During the reporting period, the RADP-S gender integration team conducted a coordination meeting with the director of the Directorate of Women Affairs (DOWA) in Lashkar Gah. The purpose of the meeting was to provide detailed information and share results from the basic nutrition trainings in Nawa, Nad-e-Ali, and Nahri-e-Seraj districts. The meeting also touched on ongoing challenges for women traveling for trainings in the region and the impact of ceasing travel reimbursement.

On January 14, the gender team also organized a town hall type meeting in Lashkar Gah to identify networks of women to participate in future trainings. Over 35 women attended the meeting during which the RADP-S gender specialist also provided an overview of RADP-S goals in relation to women's engagement.



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**The gender specialist facilitates a meeting with female beneficiaries in Lashkar Gah, Helmand**

## **SECTION VI: COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

### **Live Call-In Radio Broadcasts**

During the reporting period, the RADP-S outreach team continued the weekly call-in radio series titled "Better Farm, Better Livestock". This month's series covered livestock winter feeding, wheat IPM and weed control, orchard nutrition, and orchard maintenance and pruning. In the radio program, subject matter experts answered call-in questions on air. The program also invited individuals to send questions by SMS text.



In addition to the regular broadcasts, the outreach team conducted an informal survey in target districts to gauge the reception and impact of the “Better Farm, Better Livestock” series. Information collected from the surveys may be used to inform future radio programming.

### **Public Short Announcements (PSAs)**

RADP-S continued to air Public Short Announcements (PSAs) at select radio stations across Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan. During the reporting period, a total of eight PSAs were aired 28 times and discussed wheat fertilizer application techniques, livestock winter feeding, cucumber post-harvest management, livestock deworming, and orchard land preparation and selection. These PSAs supplement the regular radio broadcasting and provide helpful tips and reminders for improved productivity and production practices, such as an announcement that vaccines for a seasonal disease have become available at RADP-S VFUs.

### **SMS Outreach Campaign**

In January, the RADP-S outreach team collaborated with Equal Access to initiate a SMS mobile and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) outreach campaign. RADP-S identified mobile service provider Roshan, a local mobile service provider, to establish a mobile platform from which RADP-S can send educational SMS messages to farmers. In addition, RADP-S and Equal Access discussed plans to develop weekly agricultural PSAs to be disseminated to farmers through an IVR system. The IVR system would allow farmers/listeners to subscribe to receive the texts after providing basic demographic information. Subscribers would also be able to access the information through an online portal. Based on where farmers reside and what crops they cultivate, the IVR system would on a weekly basis distribute agricultural information and tips. RADP-S and Equal Access plan to pilot the IVR service in Kandahar and gradually scale up the program to Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan.

## **SECTION VII: MONITORING & EVALUATION**

During the reporting period, M&E staff traveled to nine districts in Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan to collect and verify data. M&E staff conducted over 600 interviews with farmers who participated in trainings. Interview data was uploaded into the RADP-S M&E database for analysis and reporting.

Also in January, the M&E team facilitated various capacity building trainings for KIPs. On January 19, the M&E team facilitated an M&E documentation and GPS training for DCA in Kandahar. The M&E team also conducted a brief training on M&E documentation to 75 community mobilizers, district coordinators, and gender staff from ADA-Kandahar, ADA-Zabul, ADA-Uruzgan and CHA-Helmand. The training familiarized field staff with M&E forms, data requirements for specific indicators, and methods to obtain GPS coordinates for an activity using a GPS device or camera with built-in GPS functions. Furthermore, the M&E team collaborated with KIP leadership on a weekly basis to improve coordination of field activities and M&E processes.



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**The RADP-S M&E Manager conducts a training for KIP staff at the DCA office in Kandahar.**

## **SECTION VIII: PARTNER & STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION**

### **Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

#### ***Kandahar***

During the reporting period, RADP-S conducted a coordination meeting with Kandahar DAIL and the district governor. During the meeting, RADP-S staff provided an overview of progress and upcoming plans for 2015. The local officials raised the importance of reimbursing transportation costs for trainings in order to enable broader participation. In addition, DCA and RADP-S met with the Head of the Provincial Veterinary Department in Kandahar to discuss FEG trainings and identify locations for new VFUs.

#### ***Uruzgan***

On January 6 and 15, DCA staff attended agricultural and economics sector meetings hosted respectively by DAIL and the Economics Directorate in Uruzgan. On behalf of RADP-S, the DCA provincial director provided an update on RADP-S activities in Uruzgan at the meetings. Also during the month, the DCA provincial director met with the district governor and presented at the provincial council meeting to provide an update on RADP-S activities.

#### ***Zabul***

On January 8, ADA represented RADP-S at a meeting sponsored by the Economic Department of Zabul province. At the meeting, ADA provided an overview of RADP-S activities in Zabul through 2014. ADA representatives also met with the DAIL director to review the layout of demo farms in Zabul.

#### ***Helmand***

On January 5, RADP-S facilitated a coordination meeting with the Helmand DAIL. At the meeting, DAIL expressed concerns over the challenges for beneficiaries to participate in training activities if transportation expenses are not reimbursed.

## **SECTION IX: Implementation Challenges**

Since the beginning of the project, RADP-S has been able to mobilize a large number of training participants from various local communities across Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan. However, in the past month, the number of training participants has dropped by more than 50 percent due to a USAID directive instructing RADP-S not to reimburse travel costs later modified to not reimburse travel costs for trainees that live in the vicinity of the training venue. This has limited the ability of beneficiary farmers to attend training and created community conflict. The impact is felt even more strongly for female trainees. Provincial DOWA offices have indicated that no women will be able to participate in the basic nutrition training if this challenge is not addressed.